N E W S
L E T T E R

SHORE LINE

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RESEARCH CENTER FOR DELMARVA HISTORY AND CULTURE AT SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY

RENOWNED HISTORIAN DONATES PERSONAL LIBRARY TO RCDHAC

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Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture
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Monday 9:30 a.m. - 9:00 p.m.
Tues-Fri 9:30 a.m. -4:30 p.m.

Director: Rebecca F. Miller

Washburn Collection

The Research Center has been the fortunate beneficiary of the first lot of a substantial donation of books, magazines and journals, addressing various subjects such as Native American and African-American history and literature, Colonial America, cartography, anthropology, architecture, museums, as well as numerous other fields of research interest. Approximately four thousand books have arrived so far, from an estimated total of about ten to twelve thousand. The Research Center will accommodate the books that are of utmost interest to our specific research fields and forward part of the collection to the Blackwell Library.

The generous donation is part of the remarkable private library of the late Wilcomb Washburn, prominent scholar, historian, and teacher, a retired American studies program director of the Smithsonian Institute, former president of the Historical Society of Washington, teacher of history at three universities and author of six books on colonial history, architecture, museums, and anthropology.

Washburn Collection Microfilm

Dr. Washburn had several rolls of microfilm which are probably not readily available anywhere else. One, in particular, merely says "Bath 64" on the box. We deduce that these are records held in Bath, England. Polly Batchelder, our valuable volunteer, has determined that a list of names that are of interest to us are part of a document which begins "At a Grand Assembly begunnè at Green Spring the 20th of February 1676 these following orders of publique charge and levy were made, Viz". Some of the names listed are familiar Accomack County, Virginia names and names of people in other parts of Virginia are mixed in. The list continues but with headings identifying areas that are not Accomack County.

Perhaps one of our readers would care to investigate these films and report on the contents for the benefit of all of us.

The Littleton Heritage

We have received a notice announcing the forthcoming publication of **The Littleton Heritage: Some American Descendants of Col. Nathaniel Littleton (1605-1654) of Northampton Co., Virginia, and His Royal Forebears**, compiled by Matthew M. Wise, (about 525 pages with index and 40 genealogical charts) in mid-March 1997. The history, containing over 10,000 descendants of Colonel Littleton to the fifteenth generation, traces the ancestry generation by generation, providing useful information on various families, including: Allen, Ballard, Curtis, Dashiell, Dennis, Eyre, Fassitt, Gilliss, Gunby, Handy, Laird, Long, Polk, Powell, Purnell, Roach, Robins, Savage, Sterling,

Stevenson, Sudler, Tazewell, Tingle, Trader, Ward, Waters, Whittington, Wilson, Winder and others.

Book price: $ 42.00 per copy plus $5.00 shipping (Virginia residents add $ 1.89 sales tax).

Orders should be addressed to:
Matthew M. Wise
2120 Stonemill Drive
Salem, VA 24153-4667

[Ed. Note: Dr. Wise is a retired professor of English at Roanoke College, the author of The Boston Family and a member of the Research Center.]

TANGIER ISLAND

by Gail M. Walczyk

In the summer of 1608, John Smith began an exploration of the Chesapeake Bay. He traveled from Cape Charles and went up the Potomac River as far as present day Washington, D.C. and back down to Jamestown. This voyage actually consisted of two trips as at one point Smith was very badly hurt by a stingray and had to return to Jamestown to be treated by a doctor. While looking for fresh water during these two voyages, Smith encountered a group of islands in the middle of the bay. He named them "The Russell Isles," for a Doctor Russell who was on board ship with him. This group of islands are known today as Smith's, Tangier and Watts Islands.

Tangier Island is about 6 miles below the Maryland-Virginia State line and at one point all the islands below this line were known as "Tangier Islands" in Virginia's records. These islands, included Shankes, Old Walnut Island, Piney Island, Queen's Ridge, Horse Hummock, South Point and Hog Neck, the latter three being attached to the lower part of Smith's Island in Maryland. The "s" was probably lost sometime after 1880 when erosion took its toll on these islands and the inhabitants moved to Crisfield, Maryland, Onancock, Virginia or Tangier Island itself.

At this time what we now know as Tangier Island consisted of six ridges or long narrow areas of land rising slightly above the marsh, three of which are currently inhabited. Main Ridge is now the town center. The old church was in the same location as the present one near the northern end and the land south of it was called "The Field" and at one time was planted with corn. Canton is the ridge just to the east of Main Ridge and is connected by a bridge. It was on this ridge the first settlement was made and for a while was more populated than Main Ridge. It is generally believed that the homes of the early fishermen were here while the other ridges were used for farming. West Ridge is about a mile long. In recent times a sea wall was erected and it has a small airport or park on it.

Oyster Creek Ridge and what remains of this ridge has long been abandoned. Joshua Thomas son, John ran the first store on the island here. Canaan or "The Up'ards" is about a mile and a half above the others, although at one time it was connected to Main Ridge by a roadway. It became unreachable by land around 1923 and has not been inhabited since 1928. East Point Ridge was a very small ridge to the northeast of Canton. It was abandoned in approximately 1905 and shortly thereafter the houses on it burned.

In 1670, Ambrose White received a patent for 400 acres called an "Island in the Chesapeake." The next year White assigned his patent to Charles Scarburgh and John West. In 1673, William Walton was granted 400 acres on the western island which was formerly patented by White. There is a similar entry in the patent book three years later but Scarburgh and West were recipients instead of Walton and in 1678 a formal patent was issued to both of them. Charles Scarburgh left his interest to his wife, Elizabeth in 1702 and John West's interest went to his eldest son a year later. In 1713, two patents were granted to Elizabeth Scarburgh and Anthony West for Tangier Island. One patent was for 900 acres which included the original 400 acres and 500 acres more found within its bounds. The other grant contained 170 acres of new land south of Tangier called ""Sandy Beach Island" which was probably the hook shaped part that is now attached to the main part of the island. This was the first time Tangier Island was named in the records. Although Elizabeth Scarburgh left her interest to her daughters, the title devolved to her oldest son, Bennett. It then passed to Henry Scarburgh and then to a Charles Scarburgh. In 1762 Charles Scarburgh confirmed an undeeded sale of his half to Colonel Thomas Hall. The next year Hall sold this portion to William Andrews as 475 acres.

Tradition states that Tangier was first settled by a John Crockett and his eight sons in 1686, who had come to the island to tend cattle. There is no confirmation of this in public records. The first Crockett of record on Tangier was Joseph, the son of Sampson, and the grandson of John Tyler of Smith's Island. Joseph Crockett bought the 475 acres of the Andrews land in 1778. It does not seem likely that Joseph tended cattle at all for he was left a small inheritance by his grandfather John Tyler, was bound to his uncle Thomas Tyler to be a weaver and learn his numbers, lived on Smith's Island with his uncle until about 1744, was made constable of "Tangier Islands" in 1763 and was given all of "South Point" by John

Fish in his will of 4 April 1765. It is not likely that a man of some means would be tending cattle.

By 1799, the west part of the patent had descended down to a John West who in this year left his interest to his son Anthony who completed an unrecorded deed for 100 acres to Joseph's son John and the remainder was to be sold. Joshua Thomas, who was reared on Smith's Island, bought 75 acres of it. Thomas was living with his cousin David Tyler there and had married Rachel Evans the daughter of Richard Evans.

The 1800 census of Accomack County showed that there were 79 people living on "Tangier Islands," most of whom were Crocketts or descendants of Crocketts. Farming was their chief occupation. By 1880 the population was 589 and by 1900 there were 1064 inhabitants. The population increased slowly between 1800 and 1850, then rapidly until 1900.

In 1805, an event occurred that had a great impact on the life on Tangier, the Chesapeake Bay and Joshua Thomas in general. The numbers of Methodist followers had been growing since the close of the Revolutionary War and Joshua Thomas was hired to carry some people to a Methodist camp meeting on Pungoteague Creek. While there, he heard Lorenzo Dow, a very powerful preacher, speak. Thomas, along with others, was converted. After arriving home, he arranged for a meeting to be called. Thus the Methodist Church was established on Tangier. The small Methodist society, led by Joshua Thomas until he moved to Deal's Island, met in homes until 1835 when the first church was built. An 1825 roll lists as members: Henry Crockett, Sally his wife, Priscilla Crockett, a widow, Zachariah Crockett, Polly his wife, Daniel Dise, Esther his wife, Rhoda Parks, Babel Paul (Zerobabel), Nancy his wife, George Pruitt, Leah his wife, John Thomas, Elizabeth his wife, and John Thomas, Anna his wife. The church grew and prospered until 1856 when the first Sunday school was established by Henry Crockett and Kathryn Sturgis. Both children and adults attended the classes.

The War of 1812 did not have much effect on Tangier Island until 1813 when the British extended their excursions up the Chesapeake Bay. By March of that year the British had traveled up the Bay for about 180 miles. Shortly after, they arrived on Tangier Island. They had settled a number of water wells on the beach and had built several houses. They threw up breastworks and mounted a cannon on the south end of the island adjacent to Joshua Thomas' Camp Meeting Grove with plans to erect a hospital when summer came. At one point there must have been about 1200 British soldiers on the island. In the Summer of 1813, the British disembarked for their attack on Baltimore from Tangier Island. The commanding officer asked Joshua Thomas to speak before they left and his sermon warned them that they would not succeed.

There have been four epidemics on Tangier in its history. First, in 1866, came Asian cholera. Along with this epidemic came religious revival with much repenting and praying when the people started to die. Bodies were quickly buried, many of them in their front yards, for there was as many as five adults dying at a time. Both the Death Records of Accomack County, Virginia and the dates on the graves with stones show that the island was hardest hit in the month of October. In the early 1870's there was both a tuberculosis and a measles epidemic and in the 1880's there was smallpox.

Besides sickness, the weather can be and was harsh at times. Many tropical storms and hurricanes have hit the island. One such storm in 1821--known as "the September Gust"-- swept over the island leaving great destruction. The winters can be especially hard. Almost once a year the Bay freezes, making travel to the mainland impossible for a few days. At least once a century the freeze is so great that in modern day supplies must be flown in.

With the advent of the seafood market in the 1840's the Chesapeake Bay became alive with sailing ships that carted oysters and later crabs to major cities such as Baltimore and New York. The people gradually stopped harvesting the land and harvested the waters. With the coming of the railroad to Crisfield MD, their water crop could be shipped farther and oystering and crabbing became their main livelihood.

Tangier Island today is a mixture of old and new. The people still follow the water and along with the people of Smith's Island, supply a great amount of the nation's seafood. The majority of the people still follow the Methodist religion that Joshua Thomas brought to the island in 1805. And today, as in 1800, the population is mainly Crocketts and descendants of Crocketts.

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[Editor's Note: Mrs. Walcyzk is a researcher of the Chesapeake islands and is slated to be one of our speakers on 17 May at the seminar planned at the Research Center.]

NEW ACQUISITIONS FOR YOUR READING PLEASURE

From the Wilcomb Washburn Collection, the following books are now on display:

Millennium - Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World, David Maybury-Lewis

Killing Custer, James Welch with

Paul Stekler
After Columbus-The Smithsonian Chronicle of the North American Indians, Herman J. Viola
Pocahontas's People-The Powhatan Indians of Virginia Through Four Centuries, Helen C. Rountree
Women and Indians on the Frontier, 1825-1915, Glenda Riley
Discovering the New World, Michael Alexander (ed.)
Early American Indian Documents: Treaties and Laws 1607-1789.
Vol. I *Pennsylvania and Delaware Treaties (1629-1737)*, Donald H. Kent (ed.)
Vol. II *Pennsylvania Treaties (1737-1756)*, Donald H. Kent (ed)
Vol. IV *Virginia Treaties (1607-1722)*, W. Stitt Robinson (ed.)
Vol. V *Virginia Treaties (1607-1789)*, W. Stitt Robinson (ed.)
Red Man's Land White Man's Law, Wilcomb Washburn
Virginia Voyages from Hakluyt, David B. Quinn and Alison Quinn (eds.)
American Indian Policy in the 20th Century, Vine Dloria (ed.)
Attitudes of Colonial Powers Toward the American Indian, Howard Peckham and Charles Gibson
Seventeenth Century North America, Carol O. Saver

Other new acquisitions on the shelves are:

Dorchester County, Maryland Marriage Records 1780-1865
Dorchester County, Maryland Marriage Records 1886-1906, B. Jean Woolston
Queen Anne's County Maryland Land Records, Book 7, R. Bernice Leonard
The Dales of Eastern Shore Maryland and Tennessee, Clarice Neal
Reconstruction After the Civil War, John Hope Franklin
Marriages of Some Virginia Residents 1607-1800, Vols. I and II, Dorothy Ford Wulfeck
Lincoln and His Generals, T. Harry Williams
The Confederacy, Charles P. Roland
The Union in Crisis, 1850-1877, Robert W. Johannsen
The Response to Industrialism, 1885-1914, Samuel P. Hays

WWII Materials Just In!

Sentimental Journeys Delmarva Remembers World War II Interviews of Delmarva residents who lived through the World War II era -- gathered and edited fifty years after the end of that war, Judith M. Ferrand 209pp. Also included are 9 videotapes of those interviewed, with a topical index. *[Ed. Note: Judy Ferrand has already donated the videotapes of the "moments" that were shown on WBOC-TV. Thanks!]*

Coverlet Exhibit Held In Fulton Gallery

The exhibition of American Jacquard coverlets was held in the Gallery at Fulton Hall through 28 February. The opening of the exhibit on Sunday, 3 February 1997, was hosted by SSU President William Merwin and was a well-attended event.

Catherine "Kay" Hawthorne and Ronald Dotterer, Dean of the Fulton School, compiled a 32 page partial color catalog to accompany and enhance the exhibit.

This exhibit is but the latest which continues the tradition of the Research Center collaborating with the University Galleries to tie the educational mission of SSU with the University's community outreach effort. Both the Research Center and the University Galleries fall under the Fulton School of Liberal Arts and hope to continue this close relationship.

The catalog is available for purchase from the Research Center or the Gallery at Fulton Hall for $15.00. Checks should be made payable to "SSU Foundation, Inc.", with the memo notation as "coverlet catalog".

WE'RE EXPANDING!

(We think.)

We've just received the good news that SSU may be allocating the space next door--formerly occupied by the Small Business Administration--to the Research Center for expansion. This is fabulous news since we are so crushed for space with the past year's acquisitions and now the munificent Wilcomb Washburn Collection. We have been victims of our own success, but happily so.

The gray cloud in this otherwise blue sky is that the Research Center must fund any improvements to the space, such as creating a doorway to access the new space, to name but one necessary item.

UPPER SHORE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY TO MEET ON 16 MARCH

The Upper Shore Genealogical Society is convening at the Research Center on Sunday, 16 March from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for an introduction to the facility and a brief chance to research.

This is a chance for our readers to grab a couple of hours of weekend research time which is an unusual opportunity. It's also a good time to reacquaint with our Upper Shore brethren whom we might only see every other year at the LDGS symposium.

The Upper Shore Genealogical Society's "territory" includes the

counties of Caroline, Dorchester, Kent, Talbot and Queen Anne. The Upper Shore shares heritage with the Lower Shore and the Eastern Shore of Virginia, so we hope our great Accomack and Northampton County records on microfilm will be of interest to these researchers.

A Bit of Advice

As a reminder to all of our readers but particularly to some new members: The Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture is open to the public as a means of community outreach to the region by Salisbury State University.

There have been occasions when members arrived for research and a class was in session. Patrons are asked to should remember that the Research Center is also a laboratory for SSU students and rejoice the students are there. Classes rarely last more than one hour and are usually held in the first three weeks of a new semester. There is always another place to sit other than the reading room.

The new space we hope to acquire has a room that will be suited for classroom space, so this will not be a problem in the future. However, in the interim, kindly bear with the crowded conditions.

With one exception--the Director--all Research Center staff members are volunteers or students who are "learning the ropes". Please be considerate in your dealings with them. Please, in particular, do not pressure them into allowing you to stay past closing. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

DAC Loans Needlepoint

The Old Sommerset Chapter of National Society of Daughters of the American Colonists has graciously loaned the Research Center a needlepoint of the poem *Remember Me* to display for several months. Old Sommerset member Vanessa J. Long of Princess Anne created the needlepoint. From here the needlepointed poem will be forwarded to national headquarters.

The DAC is a nationally based patriotic lineage organization committed to patriotism and education. Members must document their lineage to a colonial ancestor from one of the thirteen original colonies and prove that he was an original settler.

Long-time Research Center supporter Grace Atkinson Morris of Princess Anne, Maryland, was the founding regent of Old Sommerset Chapter, NSDAC.

SSU CLASSES FREQUENT RCDHAC

We are happy to report that the Research Center is fulfilling its educational mission to the University by serving its history and folklore students during the Spring semester. The Director and student staff continue to be committed to assist all students who use the center and strive for a close intellectual relationship with the students as we prepare them to work confidently and effectively on their research projects.

Some of the classes who visited the Research Center are Polly Stewart's English 223 classes on Folklore and Folklife, Jeanne Whitney's and Dean Fafoutis' History 330 Proseminar in History, Jim McCallops' and Tara Taylor's U.S. History 201.

The latter two classes are required to produce research papers from primary sources found at the Research Center, so we are very much looking forward to the results. The skills these students are learning are unique in undergraduate history classes and the Research Center for Delmarva History and Culture is proud to be the laboratory wherein the research is conducted.

Fafoutis' Prosem class from Fall semester produced interesting papers on the following topics:
"The Great Salisbury Fire of 1886: Reviving a City Beneath the Ashes"
"Race Relations and Western Shore Perceptions of the Eastern Shore During the 1930s"
"The Brannocks of Dorchester County, 1666-1763"
"The Poynter Family of Old Somerset County, Maryland 1674-1758"
"The Declining Status of Free Negroes in Northampton County, Virginia During the Early 1800s"
"Clara Gunby: The Life of a Confederate Sympathizer"
"The Changing Economy of Smith Island"
"The Eastern Shore Boundary Dispute Between Maryland and Virginia"

Excuse Our Clutter!

Please forgive the clutter of boxes stacked and stashed throughout the Research Center. We are "fresh out" of space and are processing books as fast as we can.

By the way, does anyone have any bookcases to donate? If so, contact Becky Miller at the Research Center.

Research Center for Delmarva History & Culture
SALISBURY STATE UNIVERSITY
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Salisbury, MD 21801

Location: Power Professional Building
Wayne & Milford Streets

PBS RESEARCHES HERE

Center Becomes Clearinghouse

For over a year, the Director of the Research Center has been in frequent contact with representatives of the Public Broadcasting System in New York. Upon initial contact, the City of Salisbury was only being considered as one of the possible cities to be showcased in PBS' forthcoming series "Imaging America". Through many conversations, the Director saw the evolution from "being considered" to "in the running" to "being chosen" as a typical all-American city, reflecting both diversity and tradition. The Director provided PBS with key persons to contact and the producers soon gathered enough data to select Salisbury as one of its featured cities. Among those key people the Director referred are our board members **Dick Moore**, **Dick Cooper**, **John Jacob**, **Pat Taylor** and **Sylvia Bradley**. We'd like to think these capable people and the Research Center helped project Salisbury into the national limelight.

Recently the PBS producer, Jed Duvall, came to the Research Center to check our photographic collections and will return to photograph some items in our collections for use in the segment on Salisbury. That segment is due to be shown on 15 April at 10:00 p.m. Please watch for "Imaging America" in April.